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Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review*

Comoros

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Introduction

1. The Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, established in accordance with Human Rights Council resolution 5/1 of 18 June 2007, held its eighteenth session from 27 January to 7 February 2014. The review of the Comoros was held at the 9th meeting on 31 January 2014. The delegation of the Comoros was headed by Abdou Ousseni, Minister of Justice, Civil Service, Administrative Reform, Human Rights and Islamic Affairs. At its 14th meeting, held on 4 February 2014, the Working Group adopted the report on the Comoros.

2. On 15 January 2014, the Human Rights Council selected the following group of rapporteurs (troika) to facilitate the review of the Comoros: Benin, the Czech Republic and Germany.

3. In accordance with paragraph 15 of the annex to resolution 5/1 and paragraph 5 of the annex to resolution 16/21, the following documents were issued for the review of the Comoros:

(a) A national report submitted/written presentation made in accordance with paragraph 15 (a) (A/HRC/WG.6/18/COM/1);

(b) A compilation prepared by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) in accordance with paragraph 15 (b) (A/HRC/WG.6/18/COM/2);

(c) A summary prepared by OHCHR in accordance with paragraph 15 (c) (A HRC/WG.6/18/COM/3).

4. A list of questions prepared in advance by the Czech Republic, Germany, Liechtenstein, Mexico, Slovenia, Spain, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland was transmitted to the Comoros through the troika. Those questions are available on the extranet of the universal periodic review (UPR).

I. Summary of the proceedings of the review process

A. Presentation by the State under review

5. The Comorian delegation, led by Mr. Abdou Ousseni, recalled the importance of human rights in the governance strategy of Comoros. The Minister had been keen to lead the delegation and presented the report himself.

6. The delegation stressed the political stability, national cohesion and ongoing efforts to strengthen the rule of law in the country, which had enabled the Government to implement the 52 recommendations that had been accepted in 2009 and to reconsider the 7 recommendations that Comoros had not supported.

7. The report for the universal periodic review was the outcome of inclusive consultations with stakeholders that had addressed the difficulties in furthering and realizing human rights caused by the country's lack of human and financial resources, despite strong political will.

8. Since 2009, the requested ratifications had been made. Several instruments of ratification had not reached the United Nations Secretariat, but the necessary steps would be taken to remedy the situation.

9. Comoros had strengthened civil and political rights. A national human rights policy had been adopted in November 2012.

10. Comoros was working to combat torture and other cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment and punishment. Torture was criminalized under the bill to revise the Criminal Code, which also prohibited trafficking in persons and abolished the death penalty. It was recalled that, in compliance with the United Nations moratorium on the use of the death penalty, no prisoners had been executed since 2009.

11. Progress had been made in improving the living conditions of prisoners. Huge progress had been made in developing the infrastructure and capacity of the justice system, particularly with regard to dealing with minors. However, it was difficult to achieve the required level given the Government's limited financial resources.

12. Good governance was a major area of concern. A National Committee for Human Rights and Freedoms, a National Commission to Prevent and Combat Corruption a Procurement Commission and an audit chamber in the Supreme Court had recently been set up.

13. Many women had participated in free, democratic and transparent elections in 2010.

14. Genuine efforts were being made to strengthen economic, social and cultural rights. They had been endorsed by the international financial community, and had qualified Comoros for support under the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries Initiative.

15. The Government supported the private sector and the business environment had improved. The Investment Code had been amended and investors enjoyed certain advantages over five years.

16. The tourism sector, which was a major source of employment, had been revived. Technical education was encouraged.

17. Labour legislation had been strengthened to enhance protection for workers. The legislation governing the social insurance fund had been amended to provide greater clarity and facilitate access to health benefits.

18. The constitutional right to form and join trade unions was regulated by the Labour Code. The Administrative Court and the Labour Inspectorate had jurisdiction to hear disputes between workers and employers.

19. Food self-sufficiency was a priority. The Government facilitated access to credit for fishermen, livestock farmers and crop farmers. Their respective trade unions were involved in drafting all public policies that affected them.

20. The standard of Comorian housing was generally decent even though it was not of a high standard. There had been a significant improvement in the standard of housing in recent years.

21. The right to health was basic. A strategic plan to strengthen capacity over the period 2010–2014 had been adopted. Important measures had been adopted to reduce child and maternal mortality. Since 2012, free access to emergency care had been introduced and the fee for caesarean sections had been halved. New health facilities had also been established.

22. Education was one of the drivers of socioeconomic development. The Educational Policy Act had been supplemented by four important documents: a report on the national education system, a sectoral framework paper on education, an educational policy paper, a mission statement from the head of State to the Minister for Education, Research, Culture and Arts with responsibility for Youth and Sport outlining government policy in the area of education, and the Education Master Plan for the period 2015–2020. Cross-cutting

strategies guaranteeing better access to education for all children had been developed as part of the interim education plans 2015–2020.

23. With regard to culture, the Government had established and supported cultural centres.

24. In an effort to enhance the protection of children, counselling services for children and women victims of abuse and ill-treatment had been strengthened. There were no shelters or reintegration centres for vulnerable children. Youth and vice units had been set up in police stations. A wing for minors had been built during the restoration of a prison.

25. The awareness-raising campaign on systematic birth registration was continuing. The systematic registration of all newborns was ensured thanks to the establishment of 99 civil registration centres in 2012.

26. As part of the fight against child labour, the National Committee for Human Rights and Freedoms had organized workshops on the worst forms of child labour for Koranic teachers in September 2013. The Government had organized national conferences on the worst forms of child labour in November 2013 and on sexual violence and all other forms of violence in March 2012. In partnership with the Indian Ocean Commission, the Government had organized regional conferences on violence against women and children in October 2013.

27. The draft revised Criminal Code included provisions prohibiting paedophilia, pornography, child trafficking, the worst forms of child labour, procuring, child abduction and child enslavement and trafficking.

28. The Government's work included public policy for persons with disabilities. The Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol were in the process of being ratified. Discussions were under way on adapting certain facilities for persons with disabilities. A fund had been set up to provide assistance to persons with disabilities. There was no discrimination against persons with disabilities.

29. The environment, protection of biodiversity and climate change were major areas of concern for the Government. The State had adopted a manifesto committing it to sustainable development.

30. Between 2009 and 2013, despite its limited resources, Comoros had addressed the issue of the interdependence of economic, social and cultural rights and civil and political rights.

B. Interactive dialogue and responses by the State under review

31. During the interactive dialogue, 58 delegations made statements. Recommendations made during the dialogue are to be found in section II of the present report.

32. Kuwait commended the promulgation of the Information and Communication Code, which promoted freedom of expression and information; the involvement of the private sector in policies to reduce unemployment, especially among young people; and legislation to promote social security and to facilitate access to medical coverage, including for vulnerable groups. Kuwait made a recommendation.

33. Libya commended the State's ratification of a number of human rights treaties and action to strengthen the health-care system, to provide free health care in emergency situations and to halve the cost of caesarean sections. Libya made a recommendation.

34. Madagascar commended the State's accession to several international instruments, the development of human rights legislation, the establishment of the National Committee

for Human Rights and Freedoms and the progress made in judicial reform, education and employment. It encouraged the State to make further efforts to promote and protect human rights. Madagascar made recommendations.

35. Thailand commended the efforts to incorporate human rights obligations into national legislation and the adoption of a national human rights policy. It encouraged the Government to ensure free access to education, but remained concerned about access to health care, especially for women and vulnerable groups. Thailand made recommendations.

36. Maldives congratulated the Comoros on its accession to the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and its ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. It recognized the challenges faced in addressing certain human rights issues and noted the importance of strengthening the judicial system and police training to improve the enjoyment of human rights by vulnerable groups. Maldives made recommendations.

37. Mauritania welcomed the ratification of a number of international human rights treaties, including the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, as well as the Geneva Conventions of 1949 and Additional Protocols I and II. It urged the Comoros to redouble its efforts to promote political stability and the rule of law.

38. Mauritius noted the steps taken to implement the recommendations accepted during the first UPR cycle. It acknowledged the establishment of the Supreme Court and the National Commission to Prevent and Combat Corruption, and the adoption of a human rights policy and a strategy paper on poverty reduction and growth. Mauritius made a recommendation.

39. Mexico noted the explicit recognition in the Constitution of the country's commitment to promoting human rights, and the formulation of a national policy to that end. It applauded the establishment of the National Committee for Human Rights and Freedoms, but emphasized the need to ensure that it was adequately resourced. It noted the efforts made to combat corruption. Mexico made recommendations.

40. Montenegro commended the efforts made to address forced and early marriage. It welcomed the renovation of short-stay prison facilities and requested details of the policy on improving prison and custodial facility conditions. It noted the draft legislation to amend the Criminal Code to abolish the death penalty. Montenegro made recommendations.

41. Morocco welcomed the political reforms and the holding of transparent local and national elections. It noted the efforts to align the National Committee for Human Rights and Freedoms with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles), to ensure universal education and to combat poverty and unemployment through the national solidarity policy. Morocco made recommendations.

42. Mozambique noted the steps taken towards implementing the previous recommendations, particularly given the political instability in the country. It commended the establishment of the Human Rights Delegation and the submission of the State's report to the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women. International assistance was vital to ensure further progress in implementing the recommendations. Mozambique made a recommendation.

43. Germany welcomed the establishment of the National Commission to Prevent and Combat Corruption and the de facto moratorium on the death penalty. It expressed concern about reports of human rights violations in prisons, including excessive length of detention, overcrowding, a lack of food and a lack of health and sanitation facilities. Germany made recommendations.

44. Oman commended the adoption of a strategy for accelerated growth and sustainable development for the period 2015–2019, a strategy paper on poverty reduction and growth for the period 2010–2014 and public policies aimed at improving the population's health and supporting persons with disabilities. It noted that women enjoyed the same rights as men. Oman made a recommendation.

45. The Philippines appreciated the steps taken to improve health care and education for women and girls and to address child labour. It encouraged the Comoros to continue to improve its institutional and legislative frameworks in line with international standards and urged it to consider accelerating the process of amending its Criminal Code. It made a recommendation.

46. Portugal welcomed the adoption of measures to promote gender equality, notably through the creation of platforms for women in business, politics and sustainable development. It noted the efforts to ensure the right to education and the de facto moratorium on the death penalty. Portugal made recommendations.

47. Qatar commended the establishment of the National Commission for Human Rights and Freedoms and the Group on Follow-up to the Commitments of the Government relating to Human Trafficking, as well as the ratification of international human rights treaties. It noted the adoption of a strategy paper on growth and poverty reduction. Qatar made recommendations.

48. Saudi Arabia commended the enactment of legislation, in particular regarding health care and employment, the ratification of international treaties and the willingness to cooperate with the special procedures and human rights treaty bodies. It noted the vigorous action taken to promote human rights, despite a lack of resources. Saudi Arabia made a recommendation.

49. Senegal praised the establishment of the National Committee for Human Rights and Freedoms and the National Commission to Prevent and Combat Corruption, as well as the introduction of a national human rights policy. It noted the legislation adopted to combat violence against women and children. Senegal made recommendations.

50. Singapore noted the projects and programmes to reduce maternal and child mortality and to improve access to health-care services, especially for children. It noted the progress made in strengthening the right to education, evidenced by the increased school enrolment rate and a report prepared in cooperation with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). Singapore made recommendations.

51. Slovenia welcomed the reconsideration of the use of corporal punishment in homes and schools and encouraged the Government to prohibit and penalize corporal punishment of children in all settings. It welcomed the policies on gender equality but remained concerned at the high rate of violence against women. Slovenia made recommendations.

52. Somalia welcomed the delegation of the Comoros and congratulated it on the excellent presentation of its thorough and transparent report and on the progress made. It applauded the implementation of most of the recommendations accepted during the first UPR cycle. Somalia made recommendations.

53. South Sudan praised the Comoros on its efforts to strengthen institutional and legislative frameworks. It welcomed the amendments to the Constitution to incorporate human rights principles and the signing and ratification of international human rights instruments. It encouraged the country to continue to cooperate with human rights mechanisms. South Sudan made recommendations.

54. Spain noted the progress in the field of human rights, including the development of a constitutional and legal framework, ratification of various human rights instruments and efforts to combat gender-based violence. It noted with appreciation that the Constitution provided for religious freedom and commended the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Spain made recommendations.

55. Malaysia noted the inclusion of human rights standards in national legislation and the improvements in protecting the rights of women and children. It commended the efforts to combat child labour, to increase school enrolment and access and to eradicate illiteracy. It called on the international community to provide support and assistance. Malaysia made a recommendation.

56. Togo welcomed the institutional strengthening, including the establishment of the National Commission for Human Rights and Freedoms, the National Commission to Prevent and Combat Corruption and the General Office for Solidarity and Gender Advocacy. It noted the initiatives that had been taken, despite the limited resources, in the areas of health care, education and women's rights. Togo made recommendations.

57. Egypt commended the efforts that had been made to protect and respect human rights despite the technical and institutional challenges and a lack of resources. It noted the adoption of a national human rights policy, the establishment of the National Commission for Human Rights and Freedoms and action to combat and prevention corruption. Egypt made recommendations.

58. The United Arab Emirates welcomed efforts in the area of economic, social and cultural rights to strengthen the infrastructure required for development programmes and a strong economy. It commended the steps taken to combat poverty and guarantee social justice. It requested details about the national human rights policy and results achieved. It made recommendations.

59. The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland welcomed the engagement of the Comoros in the UPR process, but said that more progress was needed. It noted that the Comoros had signed, but not ratified, the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. The Comoros should take action in the areas of religious freedom and access to justice. The United Kingdom made recommendations.

60. The United States of America commended the democratic reforms, the trials of coup plotters and the continued civilian governance, but noted that official corruption, the ineffectiveness of and corruption within the judicial system and collective bargaining rights remained a concern. It urged the Comoros to allow increased access to prisons, and noted poor detention conditions. It made recommendations.

61. The Comorian delegation thanked the representatives of Member States for their positive assessments and encouragement and said that it had taken note of their comments.

62. In response to questions from Germany, Madagascar, Mexico and the United States of America, the Comorian delegation said that its prisons were indeed in a dire state and requested the help of the international community to bring them up to an acceptable standard and ensure the reintegration of former prisoners into society.

63. In response to questions from Brazil, Chad, Egypt, Mozambique, Slovenia, Togo and the United Kingdom, the Comorian delegation said that the ratifications requested at the 2009 universal periodic review had been done. The delegation acknowledged that the instruments of ratification had not reached the United Nations Secretariat but said that they would do so shortly and that Comoros would ratify the conventions and treaties that had not been ratified.

64. In response to the question from Kuwait, the Comorian delegation stated that freedom of expression was guaranteed and that there was freedom of the press. Freedom of the press was reflected in the proliferation of media outlets. Powerful trade unions in almost all sectors were a vital component of civil society.

65. In response to questions from Djibouti, Germany, Mexico, Morocco, Senegal and Thailand, the Comorian delegation said that the Government was making the necessary effort to increase the financial resources of the National Committee for Human Rights and Freedoms, and that the independence of the Committee was guaranteed.

66. In response to questions from Kuwait, Madagascar, Malaysia, Mauritania, Morocco and Senegal, the Comorian delegation said that creating jobs and reducing unemployment were major concerns. That concern was reflected in the promotion of the private sector, which generated the most wealth and employment. The establishment of the Employment Centre was an important step. Microfinance was being developed and access to credit facilitated.

67. In response to questions from Algeria, Morocco and the United Kingdom, the Comorian delegation said that the small size of the territory facilitated access to justice and that mobile hearings were held regularly. The Government planned to provide legal assistance for anyone without adequate means. There were also plans for a community-based justice system.

68. In response to questions from Botswana, Montenegro, Spain and the United States of America, the Comorian delegation said that the bill on the revision of the Criminal Code provided for the abolition of the death penalty. The moratorium on executions was observed.

69. In response to the question from the United States of America, the Comorian delegation said that corruption was a fact of life. Administrative and judicial measures were taken regularly in cases where corruption was found. A National Commission to Prevent and Combat Corruption had been set up. The high turnover of ministers of justice was not related to corruption but to specifically political problems.

70. In response to the questions from Djibouti, Libya, Madagascar, Montenegro, Morocco, Qatar, Singapore and Thailand, the Comorian delegation stated that the Government's health policy prioritized maternal and child health. Huge progress had been made in ensuring that vulnerable persons had access to health care.

71. In response to the questions from Djibouti, Portugal and Thailand, the delegation said that women in Comoros had power and did not have lower social status. They were protected by traditional mechanisms. For example, in the event of divorce, the husband left the marital home and let the wife occupy it. In keeping with tradition, women were given preference in inheritance. Women played a powerful role in various community associations, particularly in relation to tontines, agriculture and livestock farming. They did well in business and had a major influence on political decisions. In the home, they had an influence on decision-making. Women figured prominently in public decision-making bodies and strategic administrative positions. The minimum age for marriage was 18. The Family Code and the Criminal Code prohibited early marriage.

72. In response to the questions from Germany, Ghana, Mexico, the United Kingdom and the United States of America, the delegation said that Comoros had a very long tradition of religious tolerance. There was an unwritten rule of mutual respect between all religious communities, and they refrained from proselytizing. Sects were not permitted. On that basis, no one was punished for their religious beliefs. However, the Government was vigilant against attempts to exploit religion for political motives.

73. In response to the questions from Brazil, the Netherlands and Spain, the Comorian delegation said that homosexuality was punished under the Criminal Code. There was not currently a political majority in the Assembly to amend the law.

74. Uruguay applauded the acceptance of most recommendations made during the first UPR cycle and the endeavours to implement them. It noted the creation of government departments to promote gender equality and efforts to harmonize national legislation with the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. It noted the construction of new schools and increased school enrolment. Uruguay made recommendations.

75. The Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela welcomed the constitutional reform and the development of a national human rights policy. It noted the increased school enrolment and the Interim Education Plan for the period 2013–2015 and that health-related strategies had led to free emergency care, nutrition programmes and malaria campaigns. It made a recommendation.

76. Yemen welcomed the clear description in the national report of the human rights situation and the challenges faced. It welcomed the ratification of, accession to or signing of the following treaties: the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Optional Protocols to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography and on the involvement of children in armed conflict, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and the United Nations Convention against Corruption. Yemen made a recommendation.

77. Afghanistan welcomed the comprehensive national report. It noted the adoption of a national human rights policy and efforts towards effective judicial administration. It commended the steps taken to reduce unemployment, provide free emergency health care, combat child labour and increase school enrolment. Afghanistan made a recommendation.

78. Algeria noted that several international legal instruments had been incorporated into national legislation in the areas of health care, work, transparency and the public sector. It welcomed the policies to promote human rights and the measures to improve the situation of vulnerable people, children, women and persons with disabilities. Algeria made recommendations.

79. Angola commended the adoption of a national human rights policy and an accelerated growth and sustainable development strategy for the period 2015–2019 with a view to implementing the recommendations accepted during the first cycle. It further commended the State's ratification of the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. Angola made a recommendation.

80. Argentina welcomed the implementation of public policies and the adoption of a national human rights policy. It urged the Comoros to step up efforts to fulfil its international commitments. It welcomed the State's accession to the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. Argentina made recommendations.

81. Australia welcomed the establishment of the National Commission for Human Rights and Freedoms and the efforts to promote gender equality, address trafficking of women and children, prohibit child labour, combat corruption and abolish the death

penalty. It expressed concern about reports of irregular arrest procedures, the length of detention and prison conditions. Australia made recommendations.

82. Azerbaijan commended the State's accession to the core international human rights instruments. It highlighted the reform of the Criminal Code and Code of Criminal Procedure and the process undertaken to incorporate international human rights instruments in national legislation. Azerbaijan noted educational reforms. It made recommendations.

83. Bahrain commended action to promote gender equality, notably the involvement of women in decision-making bodies, the creation of platforms for women in business and politics and the enhancement of the role of women in sustainable development. It commended the holding of meetings on sexual and other forms of violence. Bahrain made a recommendation.

84. Botswana welcomed the holding of democratic elections at the national and local levels and the establishment of the Supreme Court. It encouraged continued strengthening of the legal and institutional framework. It asked what measures would be taken to combat human trafficking and requested information on the status of the new Criminal Code. Botswana made recommendations.

85. Brazil praised the enhanced organizational structures in human rights. It expressed its appreciation for the successful national elections held in 2010, which marked an important step towards the consolidation of democracy and institutional strengthening. It expressed its view that the Comoros could take further steps with respect to sexual orientation and women's rights. Brazil made recommendations.

86. Cabo Verde noted that insufficient resources and entrenched social traditions posed a challenge to change. However, it welcomed the adoption of a national human rights policy, the new Criminal Code and Code of Criminal Procedure, a strategy and plan to tackle corruption and a national education plan. It made recommendations.

87. Canada asked whether a procedure to receive and handle complaints of employment discrimination had been established. It welcomed the adoption of a national human rights policy and the establishment of the National Commission for Human Rights and Freedoms. It noted the steps to ensure women's active participation in the economy. Canada made recommendations.

88. Chad noted that constitutional amendments had led to the strengthening of institutions, ensuring the incorporation of the universal values of human dignity, tolerance and freedom into domestic legislation. It welcomed the measures taken to implement previous recommendations and the information that the Comoros was a party to the core international human rights instruments. Chad made recommendations.

89. China congratulated the Comoros for strengthening the rights of women, children and persons with disabilities and for its commitment to enhancing the enjoyment of rights relating to health care and education and other social and cultural rights. China made a recommendation.

90. The Congo noted the institutional reforms, notably the adoption of a national human rights policy and the creation of a national human rights commission and a transparent public finance management system. Further efforts should be focused on the administration of justice, equality and non-discrimination and the right to education. The Congo made a recommendation.

91. Cuba welcomed the measures taken to guarantee the right to education and efforts to stamp out illiteracy nationwide. It commended the initiatives to improve access to health-care services, especially emergency health care; to reduce surgery costs, including for

caesareans; and to improve the infrastructure of the health-care system. Cuba made recommendations.

92. Djibouti encouraged the Comoros to continue to collaborate with its international partners, especially to provide adequate training for staff in the newly created human rights institutions. It welcomed the initiatives to ensure better access to maternal and child health care. It requested more information on the status of amendments to criminal legislation. Djibouti made recommendations.

93. Tunisia commended the amendments to the Constitution and the enactment of numerous laws aimed at promoting human rights. It welcomed the establishment of the National Commission for Human Rights and Freedoms and the General Office for Solidarity and Gender Advocacy. Tunisia made recommendations.

94. Ethiopia commended the Comoros on the adoption of a national human rights policy, which would strengthen efforts to promote and protect human rights. It noted with appreciation the ratification of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Ethiopia made recommendations.

95. France welcomed the efforts to implement a number of the recommendations accepted in the first UPR cycle. It praised the creation of the National Commission for Human Rights and Freedoms and the establishment of the National Commission to Prevent and Combat Corruption. France made recommendations.

96. Gabon commended the Comoros for acceding to or ratifying core international and regional human rights instruments and for establishing the National Commission for Human Rights and Freedoms. It welcomed the amendments to the Criminal Code and the Code of Criminal Procedure aimed at abolishing the death penalty. Gabon made a recommendation.

97. The Netherlands noted the country's commitment to equality and non-discrimination and, in particular, the measures to address domestic and sexual violence against women. However, it remained concerned about violence against women and the lack of victim protection measures and encouraged continued efforts in those areas. It made recommendations.

98. Ghana commended the establishment of the Supreme Court and the various national institutions to promote and protect human rights and to combat corruption. Ghana supported the country's appeal to the international community for assistance in strengthening the relevant institutions with the necessary human, financial and technical capacity. Ghana made recommendations.

99. Indonesia expressed its appreciation for the steps taken to strengthen the legal and institutional framework, including the establishment of a national human rights policy and the National Commission for Human Rights and Freedoms. It welcomed the State's efforts to ensure children's rights, in particular the awareness-raising programmes developed to combat child labour. Indonesia made recommendations.

100. Iraq welcomed the adoption of strategies for accelerated growth, sustainable development and poverty reduction and of a capacity-building plan. It commended the ratification of the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, and the establishment of the Human Rights Delegation, the National Commission for Human Rights and Freedoms and the National Network of Gender Advocates. Iraq made recommendations.

101. Ireland welcomed the introduction of a national human rights policy and legislation establishing a national human rights institution, as well as the State's ratification of the

Rome Statute. It noted that the Comoros was not a party to certain fundamental international human rights instruments, and noted concerns expressed by treaty bodies regarding women's illiteracy rates and gender disparity in education. Ireland made recommendations.

102. Kenya noted the establishment of the National Commission for Human Rights and Freedoms and encouraged the Comoros to ensure that it was adequately resourced. It welcomed the Government's commitment to ensuring the full implementation of the recommendations accepted in the first UPR cycle and its continuing efforts to that end. Kenya made a recommendation.

103. The Comorian delegation expressed its gratitude to the Human Rights Council, the troika that had facilitated the universal periodic review of the human rights situation in Comoros, the permanent mission of Switzerland to the United Nations Office at Geneva, the International Organization of La Francophonie, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Office of the Resident Coordinator of the United Nations System in Comoros and all those who had supported Comoros in the exercise.

104. The delegation had taken due note of the comments made by all the speakers and would draw lessons for the future.

105. The delegation said that the Government was determined to continue its efforts to promote, protect and realize human rights, which was an ongoing process.

106. The delegation invited the special rapporteurs and treaty body experts to visit Comoros.

107. It appealed to countries and organizations to support the implementation of the recommendations from the second round of the universal periodic review.

108. The delegation thanked the States that had expressed their willingness to support Comoros.

109. The delegation said that instability, economic weakness and pressing social demands must not be allowed to derail the efforts made to date or jeopardize what remained to be achieved in the area of human rights in Comoros.

II. Conclusions and/or recommendations**

110. **The recommendations listed below have been examined by the Comoros and enjoy its support:**

110.1 **Proceed with the formal abolition of the death penalty and sign and ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Germany);**

110.2 **Ratify the Optional Protocol to the ICCPR, aiming at abolishing the death penalty and proceed with abolishing the death penalty for all crimes (Slovenia);**

110.3 **Sign the Second Optional Protocol to the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights, aiming at the abolition of the death penalty, as a step towards accelerating the approval of the new draft Penal Code and the draft Criminal Procedure Code that would include the abolition of the death penalty (Uruguay);**

** The conclusions and recommendations have not been edited.

110.4 **Adopt a de jure moratorium and ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the ICCPR, with a view to abolition of the death penalty (Portugal);**

110.5 **Ratify the Second Protocol to the ICCPR (Australia);**

110.6 **Abolish the death penalty and ratify the Second Optional Protocol to the ICCPR (France);**

110.7 **Speed up the process of adopting the new Penal Code that foresees the abolition of the death penalty (Togo);**

110.8 **Adopt the abolition of the death penalty, or at least a moratorium on its application, as it has already done twice in 1977 and 1998 (Spain);**

110.9 **Abolish de jure the death penalty (Montenegro);**

110.10 **Continue to strengthen the legal framework for the promotion and protection of human rights, including through the ratification of the ICCPR and ICESCR, which are key instruments for the promotion and protection of a number of other fundamental rights, as well as the ICRMW (Indonesia);**

110.11 **Ratify the Optional Protocol to the ICESCR and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on a communications procedure (Portugal);**

110.12 **Continue its efforts to ratify the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance, as well as other principal international human rights instruments to which the country has not yet been party (Argentina);**

110.13 **Proceed with the ratification of the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (France);**

110.14 **Ratify the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, and strengthen institutional capacity at the national and island levels to implement gender equality policies and programs (Australia);**

110.15 **Ratify the International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, which the Comoros signed in 2000 (Ghana);**

110.16 **Continue the procedures of ratifying the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (Iraq);**

110.17 **Consider ratifying the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance (Ethiopia);**

110.18 **Ensure the independence of the National Commission for Human Rights and Freedoms, and provide it with adequate human and financial resources in the fulfilment of its mandate (Thailand);**

110.19 **Continue its efforts to adopt good governance and strengthen the role of the National Commission for Human Rights (Yemen);**

110.20 **Ensure compliance of the National Commission of Human Rights and Freedoms with the Paris Principles (France);**

110.21 **Implement successfully the national human rights policy and continue the process of incorporation of international human rights instruments into the national legislation (Azerbaijan);**

110.22 **Enhance efforts in requesting technical assistance to strengthen the function of the existing institutions to promote rights and freedoms (Qatar);**

110.23 **Take further steps to increase the independence of the Anti-Corruption Agency so that it may thoroughly investigate credible allegations of corruption, and increase the number of prosecutions of these cases within the judicial system (United States of America);**

110.24 **Guarantee the independence of various human rights and anti-corruption institutions (Ghana);**

110.25 **Intensify its efforts to fight corruption, including by raising public awareness (Australia);**

110.26 **Continue the successful and important practice of accession to the core international human rights instruments (Azerbaijan);**

110.27 **Engage in a dissemination and popularization campaign of major international human rights instruments in the whole national territory (Congo);**

110.28 **Continue its cooperation with United Nations human rights instruments (Azerbaijan);**

110.29 **Continue its efforts aimed at improving the coordination among national human rights institutions and the treaty bodies (Angola);**

110.30 **Enhance the functions of the national institutions to accelerate the process of submitting periodic reports to Treaty Bodies (Iraq);**

110.31 **Extend a standing invitation to all thematic Special Procedures (Montenegro);**

110.32 **Ensure the independence of the National Institution for Human Rights and grant it the necessary means to function in accordance with the Paris Principles, and issue a standing invitation to Mandate Holders of the Human Rights Council (Tunisia);**

110.33 **Expand the space for independent activities of civil society groups and issue a standing invitation to the special procedures to visit the Comoros (Ghana);**

110.34 **Develop a national strategic action plan for the prevention of all forms of violence against women as noted by CEDAW (Maldives);**

110.35 **Adopt a law on violence against women and ensure its implementation (Slovenia);**

110.36 **Adopt a comprehensive law on violence against women, with a particular emphasis on the protection of victims, accountability of perpetrators as well as on awareness-raising to encourage reporting of domestic and sexual violence (Portugal);**

110.37 **Establish specialized support centres for victims of sexual violence or victims of sexual aggression against women and children (Bahrain);**

110.38 **Establish shelters and other facilities for victims of violence, including domestic and sexual violence, and ensure their adequate medical, psychological, legal and financial support, and combat domestic and sexual violence through, inter alia, public awareness campaigns, education, and the promotion of equal**

and non-discriminatory access to employment opportunities, health infrastructure, water and sanitation facilities, and justice (Germany);

110.39 **Increase its efforts to combat sexual and domestic violence against women (Netherlands);**

110.40 **Strengthen the protection of women from violence, fight against impunity for perpetrators of violence against women and take specific measures for victims (France);**

110.41 **Continue its efforts to eliminate all forms of violence and discrimination against women (Tunisia);**

110.42 **Intensify the implementation of measures that allow the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women (Uruguay);**

110.43 **Continue more efforts to combat discrimination against women (South Sudan);**

110.44 **Raise awareness and disseminate in the civil society the norms contained in the CEDAW, in a language accessible and clear for the local people, through partnership collaboration with the civil society (Uruguay);**

110.45 **Strengthen necessary policies to respect and promote women's rights and their role in various fields, given that women are key partners in the development process (Egypt);**

110.46 **Continue the reforms in the area of women's rights, including regarding patrimonial status and particularly regarding forced and underage marriages (Cabo Verde);**

110.47 **Continue awareness-raising of the population, in particular women, on human rights and new national institutions, as well as put in place sensitization regarding stereotypes associated to human rights (Djibouti);**

110.48 **Continue to intensify its efforts to further promote and protect women's rights by allocating the necessary resources and to implement awareness-raising activities on the importance of women's participation in the decision-making process, and to take measures to increase their participation in political and public life (Malaysia);**

110.49 **That substantial advances be sought on the realization of the rights of women, particularly towards increasing their share in decision-making positions and in politics in general (Brazil);**

110.50 **Strengthen its efforts for the promotion of equality between men and women, and take measures to increase the active participation of women in political and public life (Canada);**

110.51 **Strengthen the promotion of activities generating income for women (Madagascar);**

110.52 **Improve the access of women in rural areas to justice and activities that allow them and their families to improve their living standards (Algeria);**

110.53 **Take adequate measures to combat human trafficking (South Sudan);**

110.54 **Intensify its fight against all forms of discrimination and the exploitation of children of poor families (Gabon);**

110.55 **Take steps to improve detention conditions of prisoners and strengthen independent control mechanisms. Special emphasis should be on the**

identification of alternative approaches to imprisonment as well as on the societal reintegration of prisoners (Germany);

110.56 **Take measures to improve prison conditions, in particular in the areas of food and sanitation, and ensure that the rights of prisoners are respected in accordance with international law standards (Mexico);**

110.57 **Improve detention conditions so that they are favourable to the respect of dignity of prisoners (Madagascar);**

110.58 **Continue the judicial reform with a view to improving the access to justice by promoting a better territorial coverage and upgrading the penitentiary administration (Morocco);**

110.59 **Improve conditions of detention consistent with international obligations and afford greater flexibility in granting human rights and humanitarian organizations access to detention centres (United States of America);**

110.60 **Review the rights of detainees and conditions in local prisons and detention facilities so that they meet international standards, in particular where juvenile offenders are concerned (Australia);**

110.61 **Extend measures to improve the living conditions of juveniles in detention in place in Anjouan and in facilities of Moroni and Fomboni, as well as put in place childcare facilities for victims of child abuse (Djibouti);**

110.62 **Uphold the educational concept for minors sentenced to youth custody and maintain separate detention facilities for minors (Germany);**

110.63 **Decriminalize defamation, and continue national measures to promote the independence of the media (Ghana);**

110.64 **Continue its efforts to combat unemployment, and to work on laying the ground for suitable economic environment that creates more job opportunities for youth (Kuwait);**

110.65 **Initiate and implement in place programs focusing on employability, entrepreneurship and microcredit with a view to allowing young unemployed people a better insertion into the employment market (Morocco);**

110.66 **Work on future efforts for the advancement of economic affairs in order to promote the rights related to employment, education, health care and housing (Saudi Arabia);**

110.67 **Further strengthen its social programs and policies in favour of its people, with a special emphasis on economic, social and cultural rights, for which the international solidarity is indispensable (Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of));**

110.68 **Generate adequate infrastructure so that all citizens have access to safe drinking water for human consumption (Spain);**

110.69 **Step up its efforts in ensuring free universal healthcare services for all (Thailand);**

110.70 **Improve the conditions of the access of vulnerable people to healthcare (Madagascar);**

110.71 **Enhance cooperation with the relevant United Nation organizations to continue the efforts to reduce maternal and child mortality and improve the access of children to health care (Qatar);**

110.72 **Continue to promote programs and intensify the initiatives aiming at providing health care for motherhood and childhood (Oman);**

110.73 **In cooperation with relevant international organizations, continue to improve its people's access to quality and affordable health care (Singapore);**

110.74 **Improve access to health care for vulnerable groups, including pregnant women, as well as take measures to reduce child mortality (Slovenia);**

110.75 **Continue taking measures to improve its population's access to health services (Cuba);**

110.76 **Improve the quality of health services and education for the population, and particularly for children (Algeria);**

110.77 **Continue efforts to further improve the standards of living of its population with emphasis on improving access to education and eliminate illiteracy definitively (Cuba);**

110.78 **Strengthen measures taken to ensure access to education and healthcare within the available means (Ethiopia);**

110.79 **Facilitate the access of children to primary education (Madagascar);**

110.80 **With support from the relevant international organizations, continue to implement its education program to ensure access to quality education for all (Singapore);**

110.81 **Continue efforts to promote the education of children and to develop training and higher institutions (Somalia);**

110.82 **Identify the causes and adopt measures to ensure the permanence of minors in general and of girls in particular, in the education system (Uruguay);**

110.83 **Further focus on children's access to primary education and speed up the process of implementing "The Interim Education Plan" and further promote the return to school of children who have dropped out (Afghanistan);**

110.84 **Continue the reforms undertaken in the field of education (Azerbaijan);**

110.85 **Continue efforts to enhance enrolment of girls in school and minimize the dropout rate, and enhance literacy levels especially among women (Ghana);**

110.86 **Take further measures to reduce the gender disparity in primary and secondary school and address the causes of the high dropout rates of adolescent girls, notably those outlined by the Committee on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in its concluding observations on the periodic reports of the Comoros (Portugal);**

110.87 **Take steps to increase the participation of girls in the education system (Ireland);**

110.88 **Continue its efforts in advancing the right to education, including in ensuring access and permanence of education, especially for girls, women and children with disabilities (Indonesia);**

110.89 **Consider including human rights education in the 2015–2020 overall education plan (Mauritius);**

110.90 **Incorporate the education of human rights in its school curricula in order to raise human rights awareness among the people (Libya);**

110.91 **Ensure adequate access for people with disabilities to all buildings, information, communication, education and all means of transportation (Spain);**

110.92 **Improve the condition of access of vulnerable persons, particularly those with disabilities, pregnant women, children and the elderly, to healthcare (Togo);**

110.93 **Enhance efforts aimed to achieve additional progress in the process of promoting economic, social and cultural rights, especially the rights of women, children and people with disabilities (Egypt);**

110.94 **Ensure that the implementation of programs supported by loans from the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank should not be carried out at the expense of basic social sectors such as education and health, nor should it exclude the marginalized vulnerable groups such as children, women and people with disabilities (United Arab Emirates);**

110.95 **Continue to take measures to eradicate poverty and ensure a better access to education and health services (Morocco);**

110.96 **Continue pursuing its anti-poverty strategy, strengthen the rights of vulnerable groups, and make efforts to realize sustainable economic and social development (China);**

110.97 **Step up the actions for the fight against poverty, in particular in rural areas (Senegal);**

110.98 **Continue its efforts to promote international cooperation in the fight against severe consequences of climate change in order to reduce the environmental vulnerability that is crucial for the enjoyment of vital human rights and call upon the international community to provide material and financial assistance to the Comoros (Somalia);**

110.99 **Strengthen its cooperation with its development partners and various United Nations entities as a way to facilitate the implementation of its socioeconomic programs and implement the recommendations that it will accept in its UPR cycle (Philippines);**

110.100 **Conduct appropriate programs towards increasing participation and enhance participation of civil society in decision-making and development process (Maldives);**

110.101 **Continue to pursue and redouble efforts to put in place the country's development plans and strategies with a focus on improving the situation of economic and social rights of its citizens (Somalia);**

110.102 **Call upon the Comoros to mobilize all its efforts and energies to ensure the full and effective implementation of the strategy for rapid growth and sustainable development adopted by the government for the period 2015–2019 (United Arab Emirates).**

111. **The following recommendations enjoy the support of the Comoros, which considers that they are already implemented or in the process of implementation:**

111.1 **Ratify the ICCPR and CAT (Botswana);**

111.2 **Accelerate the ratification of both the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), the Convention against Torture (CAT) and its Optional Protocol (OP-CAT) (Tunisia);**

111.3 **Consider ratifying the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (Ethiopia);**

111.4 **Accelerate the processes of ratification of different instruments for human rights protection with a special emphasis on the International Covenant of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights (Uruguay);**

111.5 **Envisage to ratify international instruments already signed, in particular the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment (Cabo Verde);**

111.6 **Ratify the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, both signed in 2008, as well as the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, signed in 2000 (Ireland);**

111.7 **Consider completing the ratification processes relating to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, and the Convention against Torture (Kenya);**

111.8 **Consider legal reform to improve access to justice for the poorest plaintiffs, including measures to address high lawyer fees and the centralization of courts (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland);**

111.9 **Implement national texts related to the rights of children and women (Madagascar).**

112. **The following recommendations will be examined by the Comoros, which will provide responses in due time, but no later than the twenty-sixth session of the Human Rights Council in June 2014:**

112.1 **Ratify or accede to international human rights instruments, to which the Comoros is not yet party (Togo);**

112.2 **Continue adopting a positive perspective towards the accession to international human rights treaties that the Comoros has not yet acceded to (Egypt);**

112.3 **Carry out a revision of the various legal systems in use, Islamic, civil and customary, to ensure that its treatment of women is uniform and in line with provisions of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (Mexico);**

112.4 **Adopt the legislation explicitly prohibiting the corporal punishment of children in all settings, including home (Slovenia);**

112.5 **Prohibit, by law, all forms of violence against children, including corporal punishment, as well as establish a minimum legal age for marriage (Portugal);**

112.6 **Continue with measures aimed at ensuring that all births of children are registered, particularly by reviewing the legislation to ensure that all children born in the territory can acquire the nationality, and avoid cases of statelessness (Argentina);**

112.7 **Undertake a thorough assessment of the issue of trafficking in persons and take adequate measures, including enactment of adequate legislation to combat the practice as recommended by the UNHCR (Botswana);**

112.8 **Strengthen the institutional framework for the protection of children's rights by setting up welcome centres and socio-professional training (Senegal);**

112.9 **Take the necessary measures to prohibit the use of corporal punishment against children (France);**

112.10 **Ratify the international human rights treaties, to which it is not yet party, and cooperate with the OHCHR, treaty bodies and Special Procedures (Chad);**

112.11 **Review the judicial system in order to ensure that the provisions of civil law, Islamic law and customary law conform to the provisions of CEDAW (Canada);**

112.12 **Take measures to ensure the respect of freedom of religion and to end all types of reprisals against those who converted from Islam (Mexico);**

112.13 **Continue its efforts to promote religious freedom, and continue to broaden the space for interfaith dialogue (Ghana).**

113. **The recommendations below did not enjoy the support of the Comoros:**

113.1 **Endeavour to implement the remaining recommendations of the previous UPR review (Mozambique);**

113.2 **Initiate a debate on the decriminalization of homosexuality (Spain);**

113.3 **Review the report of the High Commissioner on sexual orientation and gender identity and give consideration to implementing its recommendations (Netherlands);**

113.4 **Repeal all provisions giving rise to discrimination based on sexual orientation or gender identity and ensure respect for fundamental freedoms for all citizens (France);**

113.5 **Take steps to avoid discrimination and violation of the human rights of the LGBT population (Brazil);**

113.6 **Decriminalize religious proselytism and religious freedom (Spain);**

113.7 **Put measures in place to better protect religious freedom, including through bringing the older Penal Code, which prohibits conversion from Islam, in line with the Constitution, and enabling people of all religions to practice religion openly without risking discrimination (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland);**

113.8 **Guarantee and protect freedom of religion or conscience for all its citizens (France).**

114. **All conclusions and/or recommendations contained in the present report reflect the position of the submitting State(s) and/or the State under review. They should not be construed as endorsed by the Working Group as a whole.**

Annex

[English/French only]

Composition of the delegation

The delegation of the Comoros was headed by Dr Abdou Ousseni, Ministre de la Justice en charge des Droits de l'Homme and composed of the following members:

- Mr. Mohamed Ahmed Allaoui, Président de la Commission Nationale;
- Mr. Saëndou Djazila, Délégué aux Droits de l'Homme et Président du comité d'élaboration;
- M. l'Ambassadeur Ahamada Hamadi, Représentant le Ministère des Relations Extérieures et de la Coopération;
- M. l'Ambassadeur Sultan Chouzour, Représentant Permanent de l'union des Comores auprès de l'ONUG et des autres organisations internationales.